Sidebands

The Newsletter of the EAST GREENBUSH AMATEUR RADIO ASSOCIATION

W2EGB

Happy New Year!

January 2016

President - Tom Scorsone, KC2FCP Vice-President - Steve Sconfienza, NC2S Treasurer - Steve VanSickle, WB2HPR
Secretary - Russ Greenman, WB2LXC Newsletter Editor - Bryan Jackson, W2RBJ

Hamspeak - A Language All Our Own

Origins from Early Telegraphy that Live On Today

Just about everyone with a text-enabled cell phone has learned some shortcuts that save time from having to fully type commonly used phrases like LOL for "Laugh Out Loud" and BRB for "Be Right Back." But such shortcuts are nothing new to hams who have been using them since the beginings of amatuer radio. In fact, they actually date back to the 1800s, when telegraph operators started looking for ways to save time and to reduce the amount of keying they had to do. And so they came up with codes to communicate the things that they needed to say often.

These were "codified" in 1879 by Walter P. Phillips into what became known as the Phillips Code. They became especially useful when reporting the news, allowing stories to be transmitted faster to newspapers across the country. In fact, the terms POTUS (President of the United States) and SCOTUS (Supreme Court of the United States) originated with his code and entered common parlance when newsgathering services adopted the terminology, most notably the Associated Press. Most of these coses have become obsolete today.

73 Didn't Always Mean "Best Regards"

The shorthand for "Best Regards -- or 73 -- is probably the most commonly used by hams today, and it appears to even pre-date the Philips code. The first authentic use of 73 can be found in the publication "The National Telegraphic Review and Operators' Guide", first published in April 1857.

At that time, 73 meant "My love to you!" and succeeding issues of this publication continued to use this definition of the term. Curiously, some of the other numeric codes used back then have continued to have same definition as they have now. But within a short time, the meaning of 73 began to change.

In the National Telegraph Convention, the numeral was changed from the Valentine-type sentiment to a vague sign of fraternalism. At that time, 73 was a greeting -- a friendly "word" between operators -- and it was so used by most telegraph operators.

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Amateur Radio Alive & Well

The state of ham radio is again solid according to information from the ARRL and FCC.

FCC license stats continue to impress. At the end of 2015, there were a total of 735,233 licensed amateurs, with the breakdown by class as follows:

- Amateur Extra 139877
- Advanced 48148
- General 172557
- Tech 363712
- Novice 10939

The number of amateurs has risen steadily over the past 15 years, increasing from 677,392 as of December 1999, to a total of 735,233 by the end of 2015 -- a jump of nearly 58,000. Much of the increase is credited to the VEC program, which has greatly expanded access to license testing.

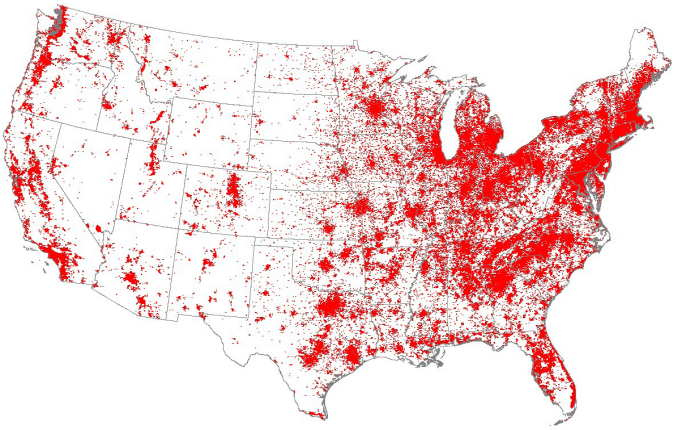
"For the first time in the ARRL VEC program's history, we have conducted more than 7000 Amateur Radio exam sessions in a year, an important milestone," said ARRL VEC Manager Maria Somma, AB1FM.

For example, in 2014, ARRL-sponsored exam sessions broke the 7,000 mark for the first time, with a total of 7,216 administered, resulting in new licenses increasing 33,300 over the previous year -- a 15 percent jump.

"Making access easier to amateur licensing is a core value of our club," said EGARA President Tom Scorsone, KC2FCP. "We have a number of members who are approved as Volunteer Examiners to administer testing and we schedule several test sessions a year for the convenience of prospective hams in the region and those who are looking to upgrade their licenses to a higher class."

EGARA's next VE Exam Session is set for **Saturday, January 16, 2016 at 10 am** and will be held at the East Greenbush Community Library.

By the Numbers
A Visual Look at Hams Across the U.S.



Distribution of Amateur Radio Licenses in the United States

Once again, California was home to the largest number of licensees among the 50 states, with 103,905 issued as of the end of 2015. Texas was a distant second, with 51,645, while Florida came in third, with 41,221. Washington was fourth, with 31,349, and Ohio was fifth at 28,171.

Licensed Amateurs in New York have rebounded since 2008 when they hit a low point of 27,430.

New York ranked sixth with 27,656. Unfortunately, the Empire State has seen a drop in the number of licensed amateurs since 1999 when they totaled 32,726. However, over the past few years the numbers have begun to rebound since the low mark of 27,430 set in December 2008.

The state with the fewest number of Amateur Radio licensees at the end of the year was North Dakota, with 1,508. Others with small ham populations include Delaware (1733 and growing), Rhode Island (1914 and drooping), Wyoming (1901 and headed up), and Vermont (2105 and up slightly).

More Hamspeak - A Language All Our Own

73 Changes with 92

In 1859, the Western Union Company set up the standard "92 Code." A list of numerals from one to 92 was compiled to indicate a series of prepared phrases for use by the operators on the wires. In the this code, 73 changes from a fraternal sign to a very flowery "accept my compliments", which was in keeping with the fancy language of that era.

Over the years, from 1859 to 1900, the many manuals on telegraphy show variations of this meaning. Dodge's "The Telegraph Instructor" shows it merely as "compliments." The Twentieth Century Manual of Railways and Commercial Telegraphy defines it two ways -- one listing as "my compliments to you"; but in the glossary of abbreviations it is merely listed as "compliments".

However, by 1908, a later edition of the Dodge manual gives us today's definition of "best regards, and that meaning has remained ever since.

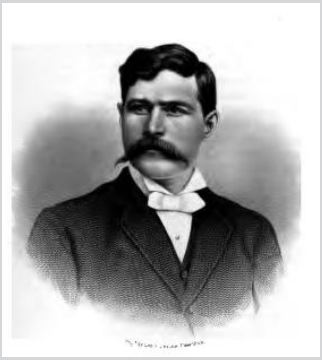
ORIGINS OF OTHER HAMSPEAK TERMS

Origin of DX:
DX is an early telephone term for "*distant exchange.* On old-fashioned telephone switchboards with plugs and cords, circuits coming in from distant exchanges were labeled "DX" above the jack socket. The operator would plug into the circuit and announce the name of her exchange, as confirmation to the distant operator that she was connected to the correct destination.

Origin of DE:
'de' is Spanish for 'from. As in 73 de XXX. It's an artifact of CW usage.

Origin Of Roger-Wilco:
From the earliest days of wireless communication, the Morse code letter R (dit-dah-dit) has been used to indicate 'O.K. -- understood.' So 'Roger' was the logical voice-phone equivalent. "Roger Wilco" was the reply to 'Roger' with "Wilco implying "I will comply."

The Man Behind the Code



Born in Grafton, Massachusetts, in 1846, Walter P. Phillips entered a career in communications as a messenger for the American Telegraph Company at its office in Providence, Rhode Island office. Quickly mastering the art of Morse telegraphy, he became one of the fastest operators of the time. Just three years later, in 1864, he was promoted to the position of "report operator" copying news dispatches from the Associated Press.

He set a new speed record by copying 2,731 words in one hour. This feat won him an award of a solid gold pen from Professor Samuel F. B. Morse, creator of the Morse code. Phillips joined the Associated Press in 1867 and was made manager of its Washington Bureau a year later.

Ever alert to the value of speed in news transmission, he became determined to make the AP the fastest news service in the country. To speed up telegraph transmissions, he revised the existing abbreviations and codes used to send news stories by wire. in 1879, he published the first edition of his "Phillips code" -- a system so fundamentally sound in principle and so easy to learn that it quickly became the standard code used throughout the North American continent.

Origin of CQ:
Like many other telegraph terms which originated on the landlines, CQ was brought over into radio and used as a general call to all ships by the Marconi Company. Other companies used KA until the London Convention of 1912, which adopted CQ as the international general call or "attention" signal. But why the letters CQ? From the French, word sécurité (safety or, as intended here, "pay attention").

By the way: Making "73" plural is incorrect since it is already plural. Sending "73s" would mean "best regardses" and make no sense.

On the Beam
News & Notes

EGARA January Meeting
Antennas - The Soul of Your Station

Every ham knows that even with the most advanced, and most powerful rig available, it's all for nothing if you have a lousy antenna system. If you're working with high SWR, line losses, poor grounding and an antenna that's not properly tuned to the band you're on -- you might as well just talk to yourself. The effect is pretty much the same.

With that in mind, EGARA will use its monthly meeting on January 13th to focus on antennas and those you can build yourself. The session will not only be of use to those who are new to amateur radio, but also to those who have been enjoying the hobby for many years.

"Your antenna is the single most important element of your station," says Steve VanSickle, WB2HPR, who also serves as the club's Treasurer. "While traditional antenna designs have been around for a long time, new designs continue to evolve and we plan to look at both during the January meeting. We think there will be something for everyone."

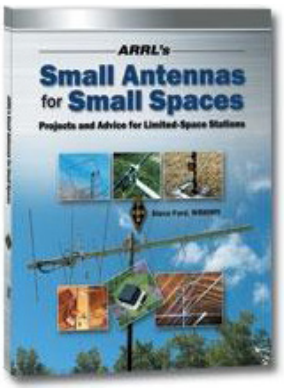
The session will also focus on antenna designs that work in small spaces for those with size limitations.

"Just because you don't have a lot of room doesn't mean you can't get decent performance out of your rig," said VanSickle. "Many of our members have faced similar challenges and have found designs that meet or exceed their needs. Our antenna session can help hams with those issues get headed in the right direction."

The January 13th meeting of the EGARA will begin at 7 pm at the East Greenbush Masonic Hall, 710 Columbia Turnpike (Routes 9/20).

Both licensed and prospective hams who are interested in joining EGARA are welcome to attend.

Antennas for Small Spaces
ARRL Releases Updated Edition



The fully updated second edition of ***Small Antennas for Small Spaces*** is a valuable resource for radio amateurs who live in apartments, condominiums, or houses on small lots. It includes ideas and projects that will get you on the air regardless of where you live!

Features of the 2nd edition include:

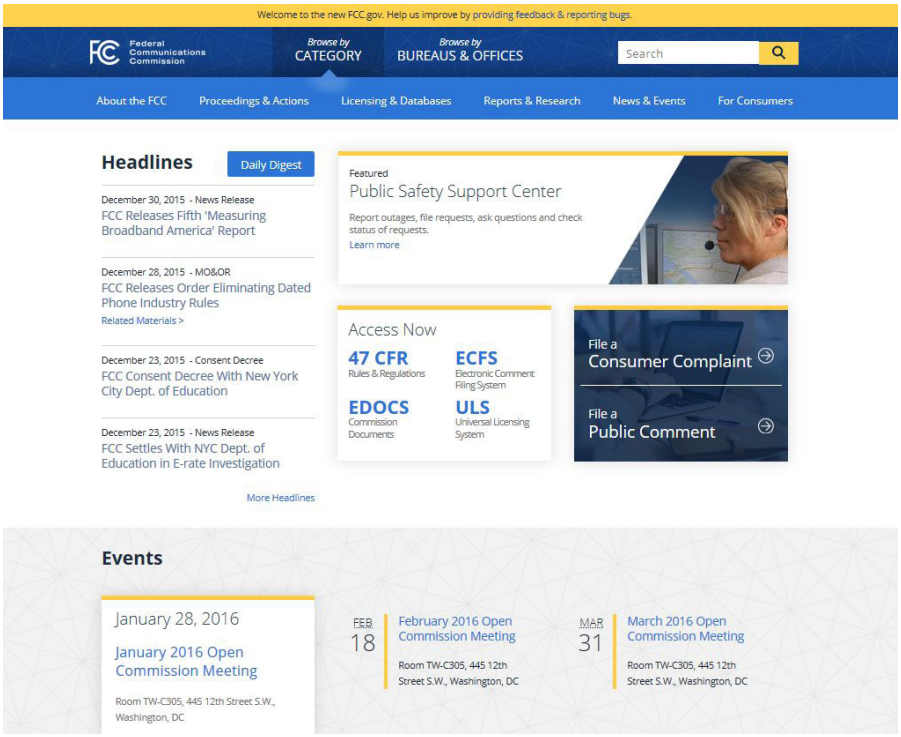
- **Tips to Get You Started the Right Way** - Important tips about feed lines, SWR, RF amplifiers, operating modes and RF safety.
- **Indoor Antennas You Can Install this Weekend** - Ideas and projects for VHF and HF antennas you can use inside your home.**NEW!**
- **Outdoor HF Antennas System Projects** - Six new projects, including a "privacy fence" stealth antenna, self-supporting inverted V dipole and the extended double Zepp dipole.
- **Outdoor Antennas for VHF and Beyond** - Compact omnidirectional and directional antennas you can install anywhere.
- **Creative Solutions** - Limited-space antenna ideas from well-known amateurs, including the innovative Folded Skeleton Sleeve 40 and 20 Meter Dipole Antenna.

The book is ARRL Item No. 0512 and is available for $19.95 for ARRL Members. (retail $22.95)

On the Beam
News & Notes

FCC Launches its New Website

The FCC officially launched its long-awaited new website late on December 9th. The Commission said its new site "features a more responsive design, a new site navigation structure, and an improved search capability." The site design features a cleaner, brighter, and more modern look and feel, and the display will adjust to various platforms, from mobile devices and tablets to computers.



"The site has moved from a flat design with minimal linking between pages to a hierarchical design that utilizes cross-linking, menus, and greater clarity of where you are on the site map," said FCC Webmaster David Kitzmiller. "The new site navigation features a 'toggle' capability that allows visitors to browse by Category or by Bureau and Office."

Of particular interest to the Amateur Radio community, the new FCC website design offers prominent links right from the home page to the Universal Licensing System (ULS) -- which has retained its previous look and feel -- and the Electronic Comment Filing System (EFCS), for proceedings and comment filings.

According to Kitzmiller, "extensive user research" determined that visitors to the FCC website "prefer a clear separation of consumer content and practitioner content," and that the "toggle navigation" protocol lets the FCC adapt its site to meet differing visitor preferences.

The sites new search application combines results from both FCC.gov and the Electronic Document Management System (EDOCS) "into a seamless search experience."

"The user interface also allows for visitors to search only within FCC.gov and EDOCS and provides an array of facets to help further refine search results," Kitzmiller and Stephens's blog entry explained. "Work will continue to refine the relevancy of the search results.

The FCC said it will continue to work with users to identify and fix any bugs, broken links, or missing content. Users may provide feedback to the FCC via e-mail on the site at **www.fcc.gov**.

On the Beam
News & Notes

And the Winner is...

The winner of the Holiday Raffle at the EGARA Christmas Party was Mr. and Mrs. Joe Soulier. Joe's call sign is KD2BSV.

The dual band radio -- which was donated to EGARA by a secret Santa -- included programming software, cable, and remote mic.

The win was very fitting, as Joe is our #1 raffle ticket seller at the annual EGARA hamfest! The Christmas radio raffle adds another element of fun to our annual holiday gathering.

The EGARA Christmas Party dinner featured plenty of ham

Looking to Upgrade?

Next VE Exam Session Coming Right Up!

If you've been thinking about upgrading your present ticket, you'll have your chance on **Saturday, January 16th at 10 am** when the East Greenbush Amateur Radio Association holds its next VE License Exam Session!

The session will be held at the East Greenbush Community Library located at 10 Community Way, East Greenbush, NY 12061.

The exam fee is $15.00. Make sure you bring your present license and photo ID to the session. For more information, contact Tom Scorsone at:

KC2FCP@NYCAP.RR.COM

The East Greenbush Amateur Radio Association

Organized in 1998, by Bert Bruins, N2FPJ, SK and Chris Linck, N2NEH, the East Greenbush Amateur Radio Association, an ARRL affiliate, is committed to providing emergency services, educational programs, and operating resources to the amateur radio operators and residents of the Capital Region of New York State. The club station is W2EGB. The club also has several VHF and UHF repeaters open to club members or the public.

CALENDAR

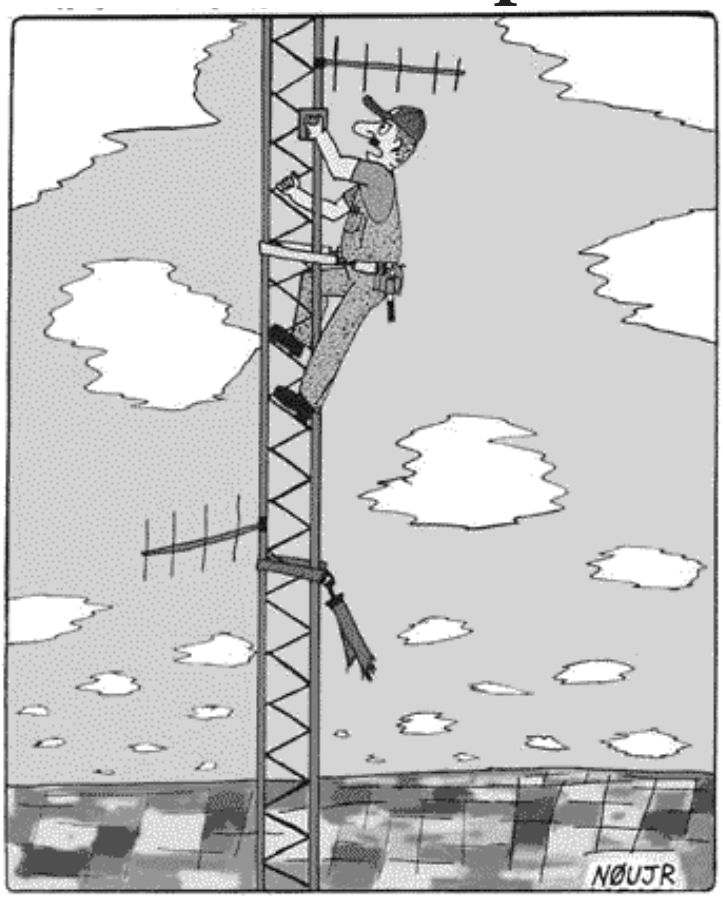
January 13, 2016 @ 7 pm - EGARA Monthly Membership Meeting, East Greenbush Masonic Hall, 710 Columbia Turnpike (Routes 9 & 20).

January 16, 2016 @ 10 am - VE Exam Session, East Greenbush Community Library.

May 14, 2016 @ 8 am to 1 pm- 13th Annual Hamfest, East Greenbush Fire House, 68 Phillips Road.

June 25-26, 2016 - 2016 Field Day - East Greenbush Masonic Temple.

Ham It Up



"So Bob, why did your Ex-wife get you a new climbing belt for Christmas?"

For Sale

Vintage DRAKE ML-2 two-meter transceiver. Uses transistors and tubes, individual crystals for frequency control, NO tone, complete w/ microphone, A/C cable and DC power cord. In good working order. $75.

W2AU 4:1 Balun – brand new, never used. $20.

Cobra Ultra-Lite - 80-10 meter antenna, brand new never used. $75.

Contact: Steve, WB2HPR, at **326-0902** on any of the items listed above.

DStar Gear for Sale - 1st system includes: ***ICOM 5100 - Bluetooth card - Bracket MBA2 - DVAP 2 Meter - RT prog sft***. 2nd system includes: ***ICOM 51 Plus HT - BP271 battery - BC202 02 drop in chg - HM 75LS spk mic - Data cbl 2350LU - RT prog sft***.

Originally paid $1,030 for 1st system and $730 for 2nd. Both available for $1,300! Or make a reasonable offer. Will also sell systems separately. Contact: Stan, WA2UET at **WA2UET@taconic.net** for info any of gear listed above. Includes manuals and software.

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Wanted to Buy

Any old broadcast radios for possible restoration, any brand, style, preferably tubes models. Contact: Steve WB2HPR **326-0902**.

Looking for a 6 meter radio for around $60.
Please contact Peter by email at: **KD2JKV@arrl.net**

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Looking to Buy, Sell or Swap?
Send your info W2RBJ@outlook.com